DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 031 PS 024 911

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TITLE Leadership in Early Childhood: The Pathway to Professionalism.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-8077-3353-9
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 181p.
AVAILABLE FROM Teachers College Press, P.O. Box 20, Williston, VT 05495-0020; phone: 800-575-6566; fax: 802-864-7626 ($18.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Books (010)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; Conflict Resolution; Decision Making; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Research; Interpersonal Competence; *Leadership; *Leadership Qualities; Leadership Responsibility; Leadership Styles; Leadership Training; Research and Development; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Family Support; Professionalization of Teaching

ABSTRACT

The product of nearly 20 years experience in the early childhood field, this book gives current and intending practitioners a better understanding of the nature of leadership in the early childhood profession and its effect on the professionalization of the field. It explores who is or can become a leader and why early childhood leaders are in a special position to set standards and expectations for those concerned with the development of children and well-being of families. The book also examines the personal and professional characteristics of leaders in general and in early childhood in particular, discussing the skills associated with effective leadership in practice. Following an introduction discussing the role of leadership as a changing early childhood field, the chapters of the book are: (1) "A Professional Issue," defining leadership, its major functions and styles; (2) "Communication and Interpersonal Skills," identifying skills necessary to meet our needs and those of others; (3) "Conflict Resolution," presenting a framework for understanding and managing conflict as a normal event that can serve a positive purpose; (4) "Decision Making," explaining different types of decisions and guidelines for the process; (5) "Building and Leading a Team," examining stages of team development, team leadership, and supervision, and exploring the "second-in-charge" position; (6) "Initiating and Implementing Change," including sources of resistance to change and strategies both to deal with resistance; (7) "Leadership and the Research Connection," discussing common reasons why research is under-utilized as a source of information by early childhood leaders, and providing suggestions for encouraging a research culture to improve practice; and (8) "A Partnership with Parents and the Public," identifying practitioner leadership responsibilities in the public domain. An epilogue recapitulates the central role that effective leadership will play in the continued professionalization of the early childhocd field. Contains 166 references. (HTH)